



Essay on the history, expansion and urban Landscape of Cáceres, MT

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to present an essay on the history, urban development and urban landscape of Cáceres, in the southwest of Mato Grosso. The city of Cáceres, formerly Vila Maria do Paraguai, founded by Portuguese crown in 1778, with the aim of consolidating its expansion in the region, serving as a support between Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade and Vila Real do Senhor Bom Jesus de Cuiabá. In the same way as occurred in Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade, the initial urban plan of Vila Maria do Paraguai was developed in an orthogonal way, as a principle of ordination and control over the place, by the Portuguese crown. The development of Vila Maria do Paraguai, currently Cáceres, reached its peak after the Paraguayan war, in 1870, until the first decades of the 20th century, especially due to the extensive circulation of goods along Paraguay river and the agricultural production of farms in the region. Despite of road investments in the 20th century, Cáceres economy plunged due to the development of other more central áreas in the state of Mato Grosso. However, the urban landscape of Cáceres brings a rich collection of Building that have been preserved

KEY WORDS: Cáceres urban Landscape. Architectural heritage in Mato Grosso. Urban expansion of Cáceres.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) divided the New World by drawing a 370-league west to Cabo Verde Islands, passing over nowadays cities Belém do Pará and Laguna, in Santa Catarina. The Lands to the west were claimed by the Spanish crown, while the lands to east would belong to Portugal. According to Mendes (2009), the first explorers of Mato Grosso territory were the Spanish ones, who searched for precious metals while also aiming to extend Spanish domination in South America to reach the wealth of the Andes. The expeditions were organized in Asunción, ascending Paraguay River, to its source. The first settlements occurred around 1543, in Pantanal, near Gaiva Lake, Puerto de Los Reyes. In 1558, while traveling up Jauru River, Puerto Parabananes was founded, and there, in 1560, the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra was established.

In 1580, Santiago de Xerez was founded on the banks of Miranda River, later moving to the banks of Aquidauana River, where Spanish Jesuits and their missions later settled. According to Mendes (2009), these Spanish initiatives ultimately did not solidify, and the villages were abandoned due to better metal exploration in other areas. In the first half of the 17th century, explorers known as Bandeirantes, from São Paulo, began to cover the region, devastating the Spanish and Jesuit settlements, thus expanding the Portuguese frontier.

Based on Jesus (2012), the first settlements in the current state of Mato Grosso occurred in the first half of the 18th century, where the present-day city of Cuiabá is located. Initially, it was a village and later became Vila Real do Senhor Bom Jesus do Cuiabá, which was the farthest point of the Portuguese crown until 1734. This village originated with the discovery of gold in the Coxipó-Mirim mines, in 1719, by Bandeirantes from São Paulo. In 1727, the village Senhor Bom Jesus do Cuiabá (1722) was elevated to the status of a town and, at that moment, it belonged to the jurisdiction of the captaincy of São Paulo. Jesus (2012) describes that, in 1734, the discovery of gold in Guaporé Valley led to the occupation of the new mining area, establishing another important settlement called Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade, which was later transformed into a village in 1752.

The author (2012) also states that the district of Mato Grosso, where the capital Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade was located, had stronger connections with Grão-Pará, to the north, whereas the district of Cuiabá, where Vila Real do Senhor Bom Jesus de Cuiabá was located, had

connections with Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, to the south. Thus, both Vila Real do Senhor Bom Jesus de Cuiabá and Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade constituted different regional power centers.

As stated by Pinho (2013), the foundation of Vila Maria do Paraguai, currently known as Cáceres, on October 6th, 1778, aimed at establishing a settlement near the south of Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade, the former capital of Mato Grosso. The creation of another village in the region was important for the Portuguese crown because it was a frontier area with the Spanish area. This new village would serve as a link between Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade, the administrative headquarters of the Captaincy of Mato Grosso, and Vila Real do Senhor Bom Jesus de Cuiabá.

Figure 1 – Current location of Cáceres, Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade and Cuiabá



Source: developed by the author.

In this sense, the objective of this article is to present the urban landscape of Cáceres, based on the structuring of its urban space, from the urban evolution of Vila Maria do Paraguai to its transformation into what it is today. Therefore, it is intended to present factors that were significant in this process, including the political motivations from Brazilian colonial period, the issues related to agricultural production, which were the development-inducing segments, and the current situation.

To achieve this, analysis will be conducted using different bibliographic sources, such as books about the organization of urban space, specifically Mumford (1998), Lynch (2007), and Lamas (2017), as well as books about urban landscape by Cullen (1971), Panerai (2006), and Costa and Netto (2017). The history of Cáceres will be explored through the works of multiple authors, including Mendes (2009), Chaves (2011), Lacerda (2011), Silva (2011), Arruda (2011), Pinho (2013), and Fanaia (2013). In addition, Tardivo's (2020) thesis on built heritage of Cáceres and Arruda's (2018) undergraduate thesis will also be referenced. Furthermore, explanatory maps will be created to illustrate the location of Cáceres and its neighboring cities, Cuiabá and Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade, to show the location of main farms, to indicate urban

expansion during specific periods, and to exhibit key roads and elements that constitute the urban space of Cáceres, as well as the locations of significant architectural heritage in its urban landscape.

Thus, it is necessary to understand the process of the constitution of the urban form, which, according to Panerai (2006), Lamas (2017), and Costa and Netto (2017), is considered a product of social relations (public and private) on space, constantly evolving over time. Urban landscapes, consisting of historical elements, are valued as a special type of landscape and recognized as an important cultural asset of the modern world. An important aspect of urban landscapes is that any city, due to the forces acting upon its urban space, possesses several areas representing distinct historical moments. It is in its center, or the place of its settlement origin, where there is the greatest overlapping of different historical periods.

As mentioned by Lynch (2007), the sense of urban space is how the population comprehends the physical space of the city and how its elements can relate to its history, values, and concepts. It is based on people's feelings and their relationship with their surrounding space, representing the identity of a population and their experiences, often influenced by the perception of the place.

The symbolism represented by landmarks or established identities of certain areas enables the population to identify and recognize their spatial orientation. When recognized by the population, it transforms the urban environment into a means of communication, granting legibility. Lynch (2007) says that legibility is a determining factor in the sense of any place and can influence the reading of the urban landscape.

The urban landscape of Cáceres can be understood through the representation of architectural monuments, landmarks, and elements of the urban space that have withstood the forces of social relations over time and have left a lasting impression on the memory of its inhabitants, having the presence of Paraguay River and as an important scenic factor and a development driver.

2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VILA MARIA DO PARAGUAI UNTIL ITS TRANSFORMATION INTO CÁCERES

Chaves (2011) describes that being a border region, Vila Maria do Paraguai facilitated local trade and smuggling with Jesuit missions, making it an important source of income for the Portuguese crown. Another factor was the control of the rivers in Guaporé Valley, which provided crucial access to Amazon rivers and the states of Grão-Pará and Maranhão. The main challenge during that period was maintaining a population in an area without gold or diamond exploitation. Lacerda (2011) states that the term "Vila" became more appropriate for its use only in the second half of the 19th century, when Vila Maria do Paraguai became a City Council. Shortly after, in 1874, the Vila was elevated to the status of a city and was renamed São Luís de Cáceres.

Two of the most important economic sectors that contributed to the occupation of the lands in Mato Grosso, from the emergence of the first settlements and villages, were the sugar mills and farming. In Cáceres, the most important farms were Jacobina, Ressaca, and Descalvados. Jacobina farm was the most significant in the region of Cáceres in 1827, engaging

in several activities such as the production of brown sugar, diversified agriculture, and cattle raising with around sixty thousand heads of cattle. The production of brown sugar included a sugar mill powered by hydraulic force and used two hundred slaves. As indicated by Silva (2011), Jacobina is located 30 kilometers from Cáceres, towards Cuiabá, and its two-story house was built by the same Portuguese workers who returned from the construction works of the administrative headquarters in Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade.

Ressaca Farm, established in 1872, was also a producer of sugarcane derivatives, while Descalvados Farm was founded later but only gained importance with profitable and powerful activities in the second half of the 19th century, especially after the Paraguayan War when the production of jerked beef, beef extract, meat broth, leather, and tallow served the international market. Conforming Mendes (2009), Descalvados Farm had modern facilities and slaughtered about twenty thousand head of cattle per year, during that period, it was the second largest contributor to the government of Mato Grosso. Figure 1 shows the main buildings of the three farms.

Figure 1- Jacobina farm(a), Ressaca Farm (b) and Descalvados Farm (c)



Source: www.guiadoturismo (a) e (c), www.zakinews.com.br (b)

Figure 3 shows the location of the main farms in relation to the historic core of Cáceres.

Figure 2 – Location of the farms regarding to the historic core of Cáceres



Source: developed by the author.

Based on Arruda (2011), at the beginning of the 20th century, the city of Cáceres emerged as the third most important commercial hub in Mato Grosso, specialized in the export of extractive products and the utilization of cattle. Cáceres was a significant center of attraction for workers, both in the extraction of rubber and in the search for Poaia herb (Ipecacuanha), as well as in the labor on large properties within the town. Arruda states that:

O responsável por esta dinâmica econômica e populacional pelos padrões da época era o Rio Paraguai e seus afluentes. Os caminhos que este percorria, ligavam as principais cidades de Mato Grosso aos países do sul do Continente e, destes, para a Europa e Estados Unidos, principais mercados dos produtos brasileiros. (ARRUDA, 2011, p. 96).¹

As specified by Pinho (2011), with the reinstatement of navigation on Paraguay River, after the war with Paraguay in 1870, many local transformations took place due to an increase in the trade of goods, particularly from Europe, such as fabrics, olive oils, crystals, construction materials, etc, besides science and new customs, transforming the local landscape and economy. The city underwent transformations both in terms of urban issues, with an increase in the number of streets, and the quality of constructions.

Regarding architectural transformations, these were due to the vast variety of construction materials that arrived via Paraguay River, as well as the emergence of a new elite consisting of foreign and Brazilian merchants. Furthermore, according to Pinho:

Ao lado das antigas casas de tipologia colonial, foram construídas grandes casas em estilo neoclássico e eclético só possível com a entrada de novos materiais e técnicas importadas, principalmente da Europa, a exemplo das transformações que ocorreram em Cuiabá no mesmo período, com a instalação de gradis de ferro no guarda-corpo e bandeira adornada (casa da família Pinto de Arruda) escadaria de ferro (Descalvados), acabamento de platibanda em ferro (Casa da família Costa Marques atual Câmara Municipal) com grandes pés direito e portas e janelas em arco. Assim como, em Cuiabá, estas edificações mantiveram a mistura com outras técnicas construtivas, como é o caso da tipologia colonial, uma vez que na maioria dessas edificações apesar da modernidade da fachada, jardim interno e ladrilho hidráulico, prevaleceu, em muitos casos, tanto a distribuição da planta nos moldes coloniais quanto à utilização de técnicas construtivas de tipologia colonial com o uso de tijolo de taipa ou adobe nas paredes internas das edificações, o que contribuiu para garantir um perfeito isolamento térmico no interior das mesmas, auxiliado pelos grandes pés direito e portas e janelas de dimensões majestosas. (PINHO, 2011, p. 68).²

¹ The responsible party for this economic and population dynamic, by the standards of the time, was Paraguay River and its tributaries. The routes it passes through connected the main cities of Mato Grosso to countries in the southern part of the continent, and, from there, to Europe and the United States, which were the primary markets for Brazilian products (ARRUDA, 2011, p. 96).

² Next to the old houses of colonial typology, large houses were built in neoclassical and eclectic styles, It was only possible with the introduction of new imported materials and techniques, mainly from Europe. This is exemplified by the transformations that occurred in Cuiabá during the same period, such as the installation of iron railings on the handrail and adorned flags (Pinto de Arruda family house), iron staircases (Descalvados), iron parapet finishing (Costa Marques family house, currently City Hall), with high ceilings and doors and arched windows. Just like in Cuiabá, these buildings maintained a mixture with other construction techniques, such as the colonial typology. Despite the modernity of the façade, internal gardens, and hydraulic tiles, in many cases, the distribution of the floor plan followed colonial models, as well as the use of construction techniques using rammed earth or adobe bricks in the

The author (2011) states that urban modernizations in Cáceres began to occur since the implementation of a city’s Code of Regulations in 1888, which prohibited the planting of trees on streets or squares that could in any way obstruct public circulation. Nevertheless, it was only in the 20th century that squares started receiving some form of ornamentation, such as the introduction of flower beds and bandstands. Additionally, iron railings were installed around the squares as a measure of social segregation, as the elite frequented the interior of the square while poorer individuals remained in the surrounding areas. During this period, public facilities such as clubs also emerged, intended for leisure. Similarly, Pinho (2013) mentions that various buildings were constructed around the urban plan of Cáceres, displaying different typologies and architectural styles, including colonial, neoclassical, and eclectic designs corresponding to the late 18th century, late 19th century, and the first half of the 20th century.

In Cáceres, since the end of the 19th century, even in a rudimentary manner, data collection³ regarding the population and their activities was already being conducted as a form of planning, for the purpose of tax payment and property assessment by gender, population growth, etc. For example, in 1870, the population was recorded as 4,537 inhabitants, three times larger than in 1860. According to demographic surveys, in the 1910s, Cáceres had approximately fourteen thousand inhabitants, including both urban and rural areas, with the majority being Brazilians, however, there were also many foreigners, including Bolivians, Paraguayans, Syrians, Portuguese, Italians, French, Germans, and Argentinians.

3 URBAN COSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION OF CÁCERES

Mumford (1998) declares that the economic, political, and social transformations that occurred in the most important European cities during the 16th and 17th centuries, due to the transition from feudalism to mercantilist capitalism, brought many novelties to the urban landscape in contrast to what was produced during the medieval era. The accumulation of wealth, the centralization of political power, and the emergence of a new social class - the bourgeoisie - transformed the medieval city, which was chaotic and inconsistent, through the use of a new urban element: the straight street. At that moment, law, order, and uniformity were the guiding principles of a new urban reality, of a city based on commercial economy. In the words of the author mentioned above (1998, p. 401), these transformations met political and military needs: “Essa rua desmesurada e uniforme, que iria tornar-se tão grande praga no desenvolvimento de vizinhanças nas cidades novas, e que iria fazer crescerem tanto as despesas, tinham caráter puramente militar.”⁴

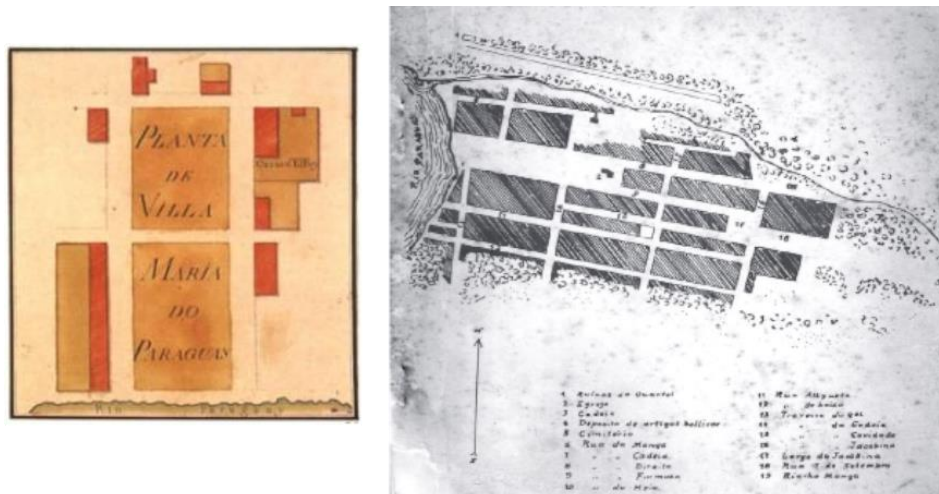
internal walls. This contributed to ensuring excellent thermal insulation inside the buildings, aided by the high ceilings and grand-sized doors and windows. (PINHO, 2011, p. 68).

³ Zucconi (2009, p. 73) comments that statistics, as a tool for urban studies, allowed for the understanding of specific areas or subjects that could describe a city or a part of it, thus enabling comparisons. Statistics have been employed in various circumstances in Europe since the mid-20th century under the motto “Conhecer para governar”, which means ‘knowing in order to govern’.

⁴ This excessive and uniform street, which would become such a great plague in the development of neighborhoods in new cities and would cause expenses to increase so much, had a purely military character.

In line with Pinho (2013), the foundation of Vila Maria do Paraguai was also defined in an orthogonal urban plan, which aligned with the Enlightenment ideas of the time, just like Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade, which was planned orthogonally to represent the order imposed by the Portuguese crown on the colony. Fanaia (2011) comments that, since 1778, Vila Maria do Paraguai consisted of only two streets, two alleys, and one square. Fanaia (2011, p. 88) also states that after the Paraguayan War, in 1870, eight more streets and alleys were established, and these urban transformations were always carried out with the intention of enhancing the value of the land and excluding poorer social segments. It was common at the time, for the representatives of the legislative branch, to view the street as "o lugar do caos, do anonimato, onde escravos, libertos e pobres livres eram vistos como desordeiros em grande potencial e estes tinham modo de arruar."⁵ Figure 4 displays the urban plans of Cáceres in 1778 (a) and 1860 (b).

Figure 3 – Cáceres orthogonal plans



Source: Arruda (2018), adapted by the author.

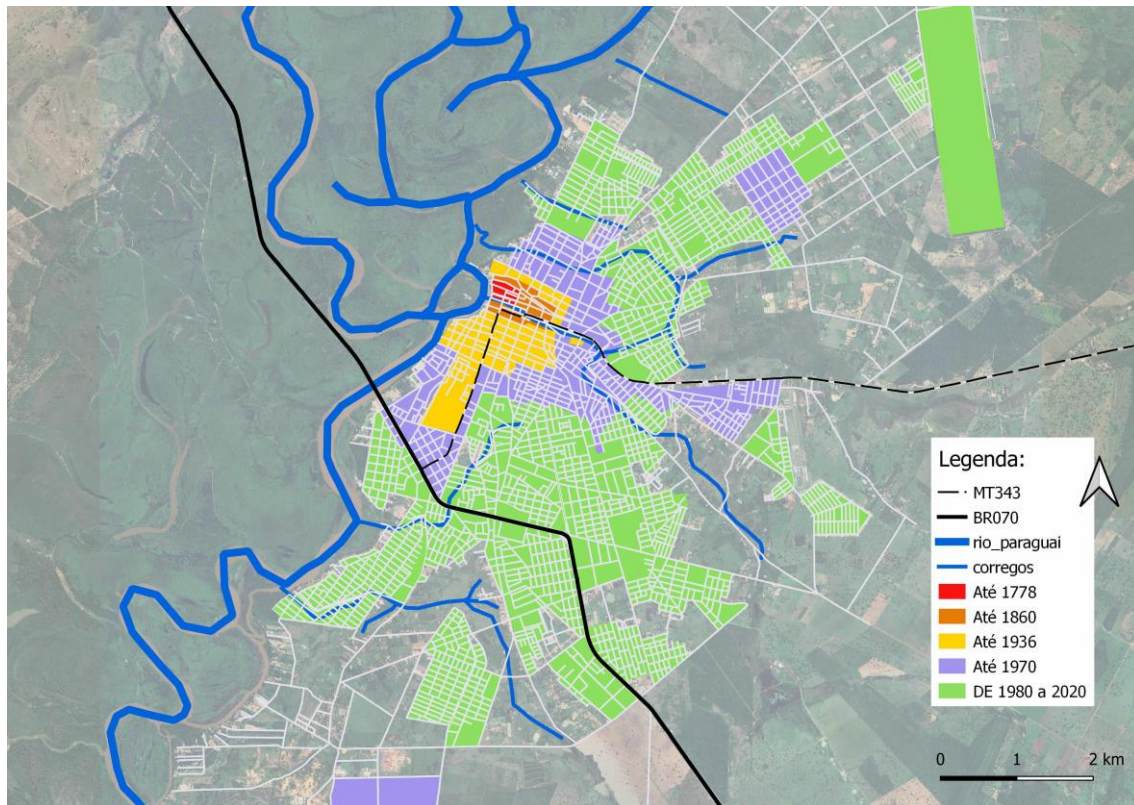
Regarding the expansion of new streets, Pinho (2011) affirms that they maintained a straight pattern, running north-south, along the length of the river. However, the city also grew in the eastward direction, toward the Jacobina farm and others that were responsible for local supply.

In addition to the flow along Paraguay River, Mendes (2009) articulates that the implementation of the Noroeste do Brasil railway, between Bauru and Corumbá, redirecting Mato Grosso, which was previously more oriented towards Latin countries, towards the southeastern region of Brazil. Another crucial moment was the improvement of land access through the construction of a bridge over Paraguay River and the construction of Cuiabá-Santarém and Cuiabá-Porto Velho highways between the 1960s and 1970s in the 20th century.

⁵ The place of chaos, of anonymity, where slaves, freedmen, and poor people were seen as potential troublemakers, and they had their own way of causing disorder.

With the improvements resulting from the implementation of highways that connect the western region of Mato Grosso, especially from Cáceres to Cuiabá (BR070), which crosses Mato Grosso Pantanal towards San Matias in Bolivia, Porto Velho (BR174), and Campo Grande (BR163), there has been an expansion of the tertiary sectors of the economy, such as commerce

Figure 4 – Growth of the urban network of Cáceres



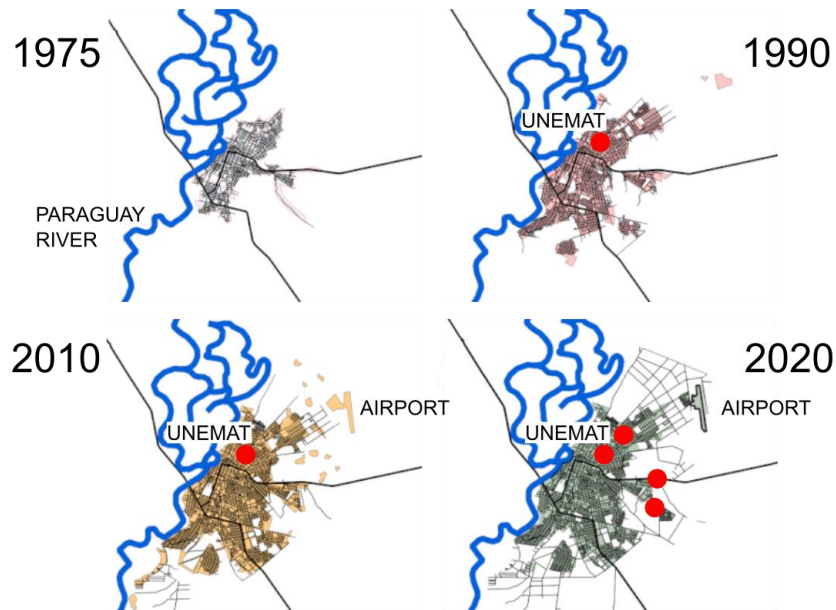
Source: Pinho (2011), adapted by the author.

and services. On top of the federal highways, there is the state highway MT343, which connects Cáceres to its neighboring cities. Figure 5 shows the growth of the urban network of Cáceres in different periods and the main highways.

It is possible to identify the growth of the urban network of Cáceres from the mid-1970s through satellite analysis⁶, specifically for the years 1975, 1990, 2010, and 2020. In this case, the expansion of the urban network since the 1970s occurred discontinuously through new subdivisions, as described by Panerai (2006). Some urban elements that promoted this growth were the new subdivisions near BR070 and MT343 highways, the airport (2000) and UNEMAT university (1978), which later expanded with various scattered campuses

⁶ In this case, images from Landsat series 1 to 8 were used, with band composition in the QGIS software.

Figure 5 – Growth of the urban network in 1975, 1990, 2010 and 2020.



Source: elaborated by the author

Cáceres lost its significance within the context of the current state of Mato Grosso, which, starting from the 1970s, consolidated its future as an agro-industrial producer and exporter, but developed in another region, in its center and along BR 163 highway, with several cities and vast cultivated areas with cotton, corn, and, especially, soybeans. Despite losing economic representativeness, Cáceres preserves in its urban space an important architectural core that represents the consolidated wealth, especially in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the identity of a region.

4 CONSOLIDATION OF URBAN LANDSCAPE

As claimed by Costa and Netto (2017), the urban landscape is an analysis of urban morphology that involves different historical periods and can be recognized within an urban space, especially in central areas. The urban landscape can be analyzed based on urban planning, urban fabric, and land use and occupation analysis. In this context, urban planning corresponds to the analysis of the road system and the pattern of land division, while urban fabric refers to the formation of blocks and lots, including the types of buildings. In addition, Cullen (1971) states that the urban landscape is perceived in the relationship between the human movement and the place, and that the observation of the succession of images by humans is analyzed in terms of their strength, contrasts, and dramatic impact.

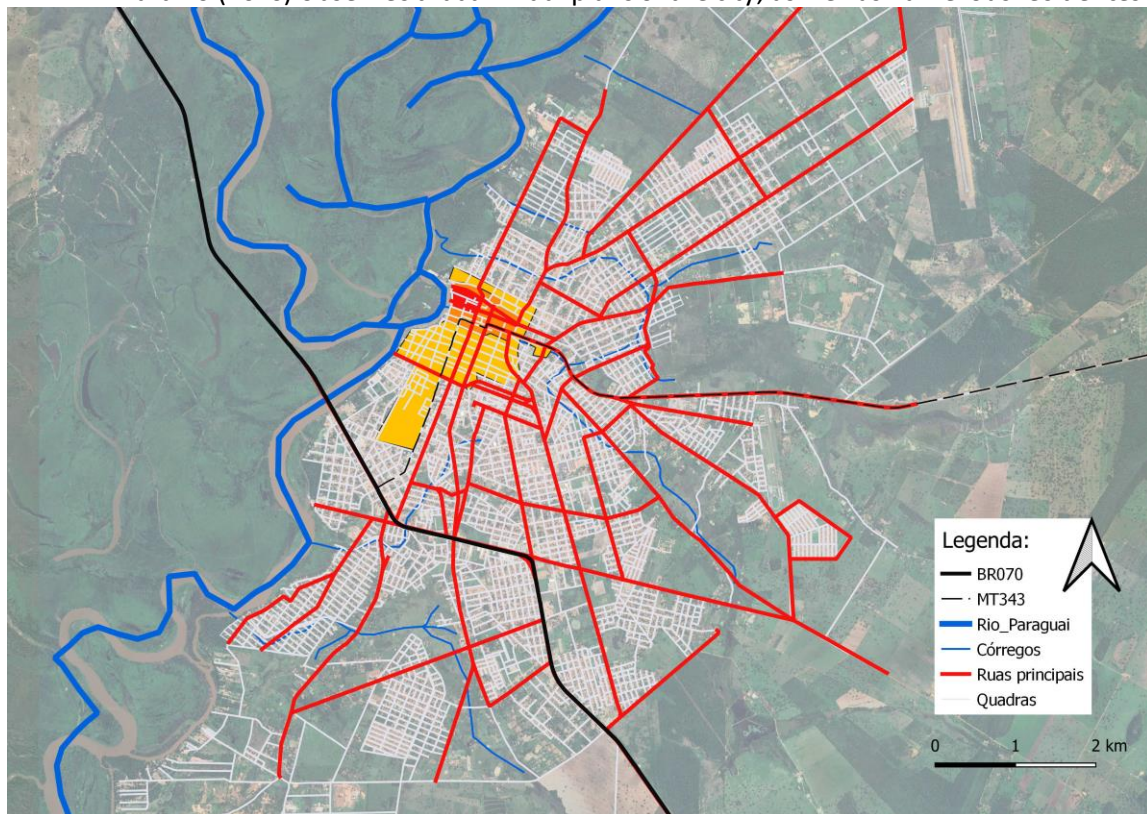
In Figure 7, it is possible to observe that the urban plan of Cáceres has avenues and main streets leading towards the historic core, including part of the MT 343 highway. Furthermore, the blocks have a rectangular shape, but with the discontinuous urban expansion, many areas were left without a defined use, which could be potential sites for future

densification. There are also several streams in the urban area that may have limited the

Figure 6 – Main streets and land division

extension of the city.

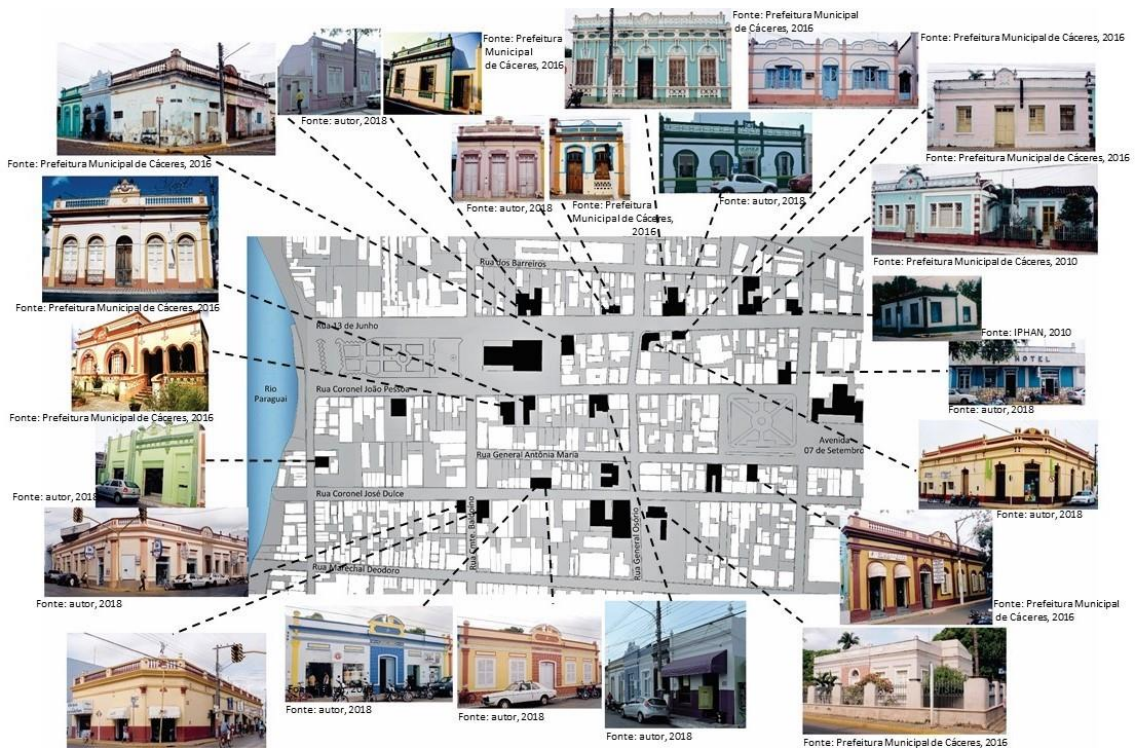
Tardivo (2020) observes that all initial plans of the city, as well as numerous residences



Source: developed by the author.

and public buildings, in different styles and typologies, are systematized in inventory records related to 44 buildings that form the federal heritage preservation process number 1542-T-07/2010 of IPHAN (National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage). Still regarding this older core, its Main Church (1913), stands out as a reference of heritage. Figure 8 shows some of the many preserved buildings in Cáceres, which, together with the Paraguay River and its historic farms, constitute the culture and identity of its residents.

Figure 7 – Cáceres historic’s buildings



Source: Tardivo (2020).

Figure 9 shows some public buildings of Cáceres e their location in the historic center.

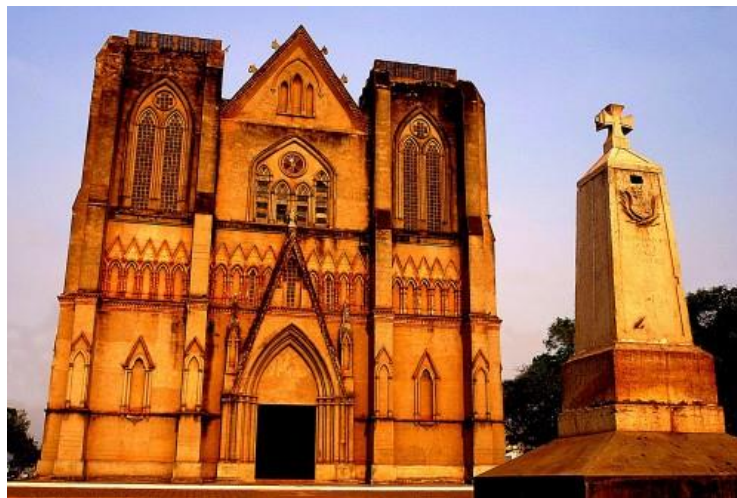
Figure 8 – Cáceres public buildings



Source: Tardivo (2020).

In the main square, facing Paraguay River, and together with the Main Church, there is Jauru landmark, a representative colonial element that, according to Pinho (2013), was made in Cádiz, Spain. It represented the division of boundaries between Portugal and Spain by the Treaty of Tordesillas and later rectified by the Treaty of Madrid (1750). The landmark was installed in 1754 at the mouth of Jauru River and later removed from its original location, being subsequently relocated at the center of Cáceres in 1866. Figure 10 shows the Main Church of Cáceres and the Jauru landmark.

Figure 9 - Cáceres main church and e Jauru landmark



Source: www.municipiobrasileiros.blogspot.com

The preservation of the properties in Cáceres' historic center may have been influenced by the economic decline of the region, as new agricultural production areas emerged in the 1970s, in the central-northern region of the state of Mato Grosso, particularly soybean farming. This, to some extent, may have mitigated the impact of social forces.

5 CONCLUSION

The city of Cáceres, since its foundation as Vila Maria do Paraguai, in 1778, experienced significant economic and urban development between mid-19th and 20th centuries. Its most significant aspect was its location along Paraguay River, which allowed for trade, both to the northern and southern regions, including other countries. During this period, the substantial agricultural production from the farms and trade contributed to urban expansion and high-quality architectural production. However, Cáceres experienced an economic decline with the development of other cities in Mato Grosso, despite the construction of highways that facilitated access from Cáceres to other cities in the region and in the country.

The growth of Cáceres' urban fabric, which was once continuous, became discontinuous in the mid-20th century due to the development of new areas near the BR 070 and MT 343 highways. The presence of several streams within the urban area may have also contributed to the discontinuity of the urban fabric. Other factors that may have played a role

are the establishment of the State University of Mato Grosso – UNEMAT, in 1978, and the inauguration of the airport, in 2000.

In addition to Paraguay River and the lush nature of Mato Grosso’s Pantanal, the architecture of the historic buildings in Cáceres, both in the historic center and the surrounding farms, is the most significant reference of the urban landscape. Through the reconstruction of this subject, in a chronological manner, we can observe that the preservation of the original urban layout, since its foundation to the present day, serves as an important element of perception and identity for the population of Cáceres.

On the other hand, regarding historic buildings, the preservation and monitoring of the already listed buildings are important, but the existence of a single IPHAN in Cuiabá, which is 220 km away from Cáceres, can bring difficulties in terms of oversight. In this case, the promptness of inspection and control allows for approval or guidance on restoration projects of these buildings, ensuring their use and preservation. These measures are important tools aimed at their preservation, as unused buildings can deteriorate more easily.

Important issues to ensure the security of architectural heritage are what we envision for future research and extension projects, where it is possible to establish the creation of a local normative instruction that provides specific guidelines regarding facades, internal use of spaces, and surrounding buildings. This could include implementation of height restrictions, prioritizing historical buildings, their valorization, and safeguarding, in a guiding and proactive manner.

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